LOW LIFE

ABOVE STAIRS.

A

FARCE,

As it is Acted

in moſt Families of DISTINCTION
Throughout the KINGDOM.

LONDON:
Printed by J. Smith, in the Strand.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Duke of Loveſport.
Lord Lawleſs.
Lord Libertine.
Sir William Sycophant.
Friſſeron, *a* French *Barber.*
Porter,
Tradeſmen.

WOMEN.

Dutcheſs of Loveſport.
Betty, *her Woman.*

PROLOGUE,

By a FRIEND;

Intended to be ſpoken by Mrs. CLIVE.

LOW LIFE above Stairs! Fie, 'tis idle Stuff:
We've ſeen low Life above Stairs long enough.
This Author is a moſt provoking Creature,
How durſt he copy high Life after Nature?
Preſumptuous Bards moſt inſolently ſhow,
Low Life above Stairs, and high Life below!
Curs'd Poet thus to vilify the Great,
No Dutcheſs can from Virtue deviate.
To Worth high Quality is ſtill allied,
For ſure your Virtue can the Teſt abide:
Your noble Minds all genuine Worth adorns,
No *Engliſh* Peer was ever ſeen with Horns!
Dutcheſſes ne'er were known to make falſe Steps,
'Tis Calumny to call them Demi-reps.
Tho' Suitors ſhall attend them in a Train,
Their Reputations know no Spot or Stain!
What tho' they're free of Speech, ſing, play and dance?
What tho' they Copy all the Modes of *France?*
What tho' they liſp and trip, diſtort their Features,
Bedaub their Faces, and nick-name GOD's Creatures!
Moſt virtuous theſe, where Virtue's Self reſides,
Their Conduct ſtill, all Calumny derides.
They ever liſten to fair Virtue's Lore,
So harmleſs—that they think no Wife a Whore.

LOW LIFE
ABOVE STAIRS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Lord Lawleſs's *Houſe*

Lord Lawleſs *and Lord* Libertine *entering.*

Lord LIBERTINE.

WHAT turn Footman! I'd be glad to know, what has put you upon ſo ſtrange a Frolick?

Lord *Lawleſs.* Your Curioſity ſhall ſoon be ſatisfied; you muſt know I have for ſome time paſt languiſhed, with the moſt tender Paſſion for the Dutcheſs of *Loveſport*, and ſhe having heard me as favourably as I could wiſh, has herſelf ſuggeſted this Stratagem to facilitate our Intercouſe.

Lord *Liber.* 'Tis an odd Whim enough in the Lady; ſhe ſeems to have but little Occaſion for ſuch Expedients, as the Duke, who has no longer any Manner of Doubt that he is of the honourable Order of Cuckolds, has left his Lady to her own Diſcretion, and lays it down as a Maxim, that a Man's Honour does not depend upon his Wife's lifting up her Petty-coat, or keeping it down.

Lord *Law.* The Maxim undoubtedly is a very juſt one, and ſhews his Grace's Philoſophy to be equal to his Taſte, which is allowed to be exquiſite in all the Arts.

Lord *Liber*. Now you talk of his Graces Taſte, I have often heard it hinted, that it was exquiſite in ſomething elſe beſides the Arts.

Lord *Law*. I have heard ſome graceleſs Reports of his Grace myſelf, but let that reſt. Do but read over this Letter, and then judge whether I have not Reaſon to think myſelf a happy Man.

Lord *Libertine* reads:

My dear Lord, *Nov.* 6, 1759.

PERSONS of my Rank ſhould be exempted from thoſe Conſtraints of Decorum, which the Tyrant Cuſtom has laid upon ſuch of the Sex as can plead neither Title nor Coronet to authoriſe the Infringement of them. I ſhall therefore make a free Declaration of my Sentiments without any Diſguiſe or Ceremony. I have no Objection to your Perſon, my Lord; what I have ſeen of it has given me a favourable Idea of what I could not ſee. You have as fine a Leg as any Man in *England*; and I make no Doubt but you have a very good Skin. You have profeſſed a Paſſion for me, which I believe to be ſincere. To put me out of all Doubt endeavour to get into the Family as a Footman, for in that Diſguiſe you will ſurely be able to give me convincing Proofs of your Love. Your's,

ELIZ. LOVESPORT.

The Lady has here given you ſufficient Encouragement, I believe, you need not deſpair. But if I was you, I'd have nothing to ſay to her by G—d.

Lord *Law*. Why ſo?

Lord *Liber*. I ſhould not care to venture; her Ladyſhip has been poxed as often as any Drab in *Drury-lane*.

Lord *Law*. Poh! I don't mind that: all ſuch Conſiderations never obſtruct my Pleaſure: If an Accident ſhould happen there are Surgeons enough in Town, and the Dutcheſs is worth going thro' a Salivation for by G-d.

Lord *Liber*. I'd ſee all the Dutcheſſes and Counteſſes in *England* at the Devil before I'd buy them at that

Price

Price. But ſince you are determined upon the Adventure I wiſh you Succeſs. Adieu; I muſt go and pay Sir *William Sycophant* a Viſit.

Lord *Law.* And I'll go directly and prepare my Diſguiſe: Love has made many a great Man deſcend from his Character.

The God of Love ſpares neither great nor ſmall,
He makes the Counteſs like the Sempſtreſs fall;
His Power weak Mortals vainly would oppoſe,
Since he makes Lords aſſume their Lacquies Cloaths.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE II.

Scene changes to Sir William Sycophant's *Houſe in* Groſvenor-Square. *Several Perſons waiting at the Door.*

To them the *Porter.* God confound you all, what a damn'd Rout you make. I tell you my Maſter is not ſtirring.

Firſt Tradeſman. Then by G—d I'll ſtay till he is, I have been put off ten Times already, but I'm reſolved I'll be put off no longer.

Second Tradeſman. Nor I, by G—d, poor Folks muſt live as well as rich Folks.

Third Tradeſman. Take Care what you ſay, Gentlemen; Sir *William* is a Member of Parliament, and has a Privilage not to pay us, if he pleaſes.

Firſt Tradeſman. There may be ſomething in that Neighbour, to be ſure 'tis dangerous to aggravate great Folks.

Enter Lord Libertine.

Lord *Lib.* Is Sir *William* ſtirring?

Porter. He is, my Lord.

Firſt Tradeſman. If I could ſpeak one Word to his Honour.

Porter. Damn your Blood; what are you plaguing me for: His Honour's buſy, you can't ſpeak to him till he's done.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Lord Libertine *and Sir* William Sycophant *entering.*

Lord *Liber.* Sir *William*, your humble Servant. I am come to aſk a Favour of you, Sir *William.*

Sir *William.* My Lord, any Thing that lies in my Power you may depend upon.

Lord *Lib.* Not to keep you any longer in Suſpence, Sir, *William*, you are to underſtand that Doctor *Jeremiah Supple*, my Chaplain, has lately done me a Piece of Service, which, as a Man of Honour, I think myſelf obliged to requite. The Action moſt certainly merits a Reward: You muſt know, I had for ſome Time met with an obſtinate Reſiſtance from a Siſter of his, who had ſome preciſe and whimſical Notions of Virtue, which the Reverend Mr. *Supple*, being an excellent Caſuiſt, found Means to remove, and for this Service, I muſt beg the favour of you to exert your Intereſt to get him preferred to the See of ——.

Sir *William.* My Lord, I ſhall employ all the Intereſt I have in your Chaplain's Behalf. But I muſt beg the Favour of you to procure a Captain's Commiſſion for Mr, *Shouldernot.*

Lord *Lib.* Mr. *Shouldernot!* Why he was formerly your Footman; it would be a Diſgrace to the Army.

Sir *William.* Give me leave to tell you, my Lord, that he has now noble Blood in his Veins. He has been P—th—k to the Honourable Mr. ——.

Lord *Lib.* Since you patronize him, Sir *William*, I ſhall do all that lies in my Power for him.

Sir *Wil. I* wiſh you a good Morning. [*Exit.*

SCENE. IV.

Enter Firſt Tradeſman.

I aſk your Honour's Pardon, but my Neceſſities are ſo great, that *I* hope your Honour will conſider me.

Sir

Sir *Wil.* Mr. *Cucumber*, *I* have ſo much Buſineſs upon my Hands this Morning that *I* can think of nothing elſe, but if you call four or five Days hence you may depend upon being ſatisfied. [*Exit. Taylor.*

Enter Second Tradeſman.

Pleaſe your Honour, *I* am come to ſee if this little Account can be ſettled. Your Honour knows it is of a pretty long Standing.

Sir *Wil.* Mr. *Frizzel*, you have come at a very unlucky Time, *I* have two much Buſineſs now to ſettle Accounts. Call To-morrow, or next Day.

[*Exit Perukemaker.*

Enter Third Tradeſman.

If your Honour would be ſo good as to look over that Account, your Honour ——.

Sir *Wil.* Call any Time next Week, and you may depend upon being paid. [*Exit Tradeſman.*

Sir William *ſolus.*

Thus we Courtiers pay all Debts, but Debts of Honour. To contract Debts, and never pay them, is the greateſt Prerogative of high Station. A Debtor is under a Sort of a Promiſe, and it would be a Soleciſm in a Courtier to be as good as his Word. [*Exit.*

SCENE. V.

Enter the Dutcheſs of Loveſport *and Lord* Lawleſs *diſguiſed as a Footman.*

Lord *Law.* This Diſguiſe removes all Obſtacles to the Completion of our Deſires. We may thus defy the Viligance of Jealouſy, and the Conſoriouſneſs of a malicious World. But why do you ſtill defer my Happineſs by theſe unkind Delays?

Dutcheſs of *Love.* You are a ſtrange Man, my Lord, how can you put ſuch a Conſtruction upon an innocent Frolick. When *I* deſired you to take this Diſguiſe, *I* never once dreamt you would have carried Things ſo far; if *I* had, *I* ſhould never have propoſed it to you.

PART

Low Life above Stairs.

PART. II.

Lord *Law*. In your Letter, Madam, you expreſſed yourſelf in very different Terms, that gave me ſome Reaſon to a different Reception.

Dutcheſs of *Lover*. Lord! how you miſunderſtand one's Words; but ſuppoſing ſome Expreſſion capable of ſuch an Interpretation might have eſcaped me, does one always know what one writes?

Lord *Law*. *If* that be the Caſe, Madam, my Company is entirely unneceſſary, and therefore *I* ſhall take my Leave of your Ladyſhip. [*Going*.

Dut. What haſt are you in? *I* never knew ſuch a provoking Fellow in my Life. Don't go, *I* have ſomething to ſay to you. Do you think *I* ſent for you for nothing?

Lord *Law*, If your Ladyſhip ſent for me, *I* think it was for nothing. [*Going*.

Dut. Stay one Moment, my Lord, and anſwer me this Queſtion, What did you imagine *I* ſent for you for?

Lord *Law*. *I* came with an intent to lie with your Ladyſhip, and *I* really thought you ſent for me for that Purpoſe. But ſince *I* ſee you have changed your Mind, *I* will not trouble you any longer with my Company. [*Going*.

Dutcheſs pulling him back. Lord! how ſudden you are in Your Judgments. Don't be quite ſo ſure that *I* have changed my Mind. *It* does not follow from any Thing *I* have ſaid. You know, my Lord we Women do not always know our own Minds.

Lord *Law*. *I* aſk your Ladyſhip's Pardon, but ſince you ſo often retract what you ſay, *I* ſhall no longer give Credit to Words, Actions alone can now convince me.

But *à propos I* ſee a Bed in the next Room, let me conduct you thither, and when we are upon it, *I* ſhall liſten to your Arguments with more Attention.

Dutcheſs. Why indeed, when your Lordſhip's ſtanding, you are ſo impatient and intractable, that one can't get you to hear Reaſon; ſo *I* believe *I* muſt humour you.

Lord *Law.* Your Ladyſhip's Complaint is very juſt, and if you will favour me with your Hand, *I* will ſoon convince you, that *I* am not always impatient and intractable when ſtanding.

Dut. Lead on, my Lord, but firſt you muſt promiſe me, that you will offer no Indecencies.

Lord *Law.* Your Ladyſhip may be under no Concern upon that Account, you know *I* am a Man of Honour.

Dut. Every Body knows your Lordſhip has good Blood in your Veins, and *I* hope, you will acquit yourſelf accordingly.

Lord *Law.* Let us loſe no more of our precious Time in Words. The Duke may come and interrupt our interview.

Dut. Well rembered. That would be a moſt *mal à propos* Accident. The Company of that odious Creature a Huſband, tho' always diſagreeable, is particularly ſo upon certain Occaſions.

Lord *Law.* Then let us without Delay avail ourſelves of this glorious, golden Opportunity.

To the PIT.

While we retire to plunge in Floods of Bliſs,
Your Preſence here, kind Sirs, is not amiſs;
A friendly Office you our Love may do,
We'd do as much in ſuch a Caſe for you.
On you this cannot bring the leaſt Reproach,
Cough, or cry Hem! ſhould any one approach

[*Exeunt Arm in Arm.*

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter the Duke of Loveſport.

IT is a damn'd Thing that a Man of my Quality ſhould be taken in ſo groſly, by a Pack of ſcoundrel Sharpers. Three Thouſand Pounds in one Night. Well, I'll think no more about it. I don't know what to do with myſelf. I'll go and paſs away an hour with my wife; perhaps ſhe may give me a little matrimonial Conſolation.

SCENE II.

Scene opens and diſcovers Lord Lawleſs *and the Dutcheſs of* Loveſport *in Bed together.*

Enter Duke of Loveſport.

Duke. The Dutcheſs in Bed already; 'tis no wonder ſhe ſhould be indiſpoſed, as ſhe ſits up every Night till three o'Clock at Lady *Cheatall*'s Rout. However, I ſhall comfort her by my Preſence. *(Going to the Bed.*

Dutcheſs ſoftly to Lord *Lawleſs.* Oh! 'tis my Husband, I'm undone; he never came at ſo unſeaſonable an hour before; he has taken me quite unawares.

Lord *Lawleſs.* Aye, and me too. But I'm prepared for him. *(Starts up in his Shirt with a Piſtol in his Hand.)* So your Grace is come to ſpoil ſport, but I am ready for you by G--d, if you are diſſatisfied at ſeeing me here, I'll go out with you directly.

Duke. My dear Lord *Lawleſs*, I am very glad to ſee you; how have you been this Age?

Lord *Lawleſs.* This is no Time for Compliments; take this Piſtol, and do yourſelf Juſtice; or if you have any Objection to a Ball, I wear a ſword, Sir.

Duke. My dear Lord, I'm in Pain for you. You'll get your Death of Cold; pray go into Bed again. Theſe are things that ſhould not be taken Notice of among Friends.

Lord

Lord *Lawleſs*. Your Grace's Behaviour is ſo very generous, that I ſhall make it my ſtudy to prove grateful: Whenever I marry, my Wife ſhall be at your ſervice. (*Exit.*

Duke. Lord, Madam! how could you be ſo indiſcreet, when you have a Mind to have a Tete-a-tete with a Friend, you might at leaſt lock the Door to prevent Accidents.

Dutcheſs. You are the moſt unpolite Huſband in the Pariſh of St. *James*'s, to come into my Apartment, without knocking at the Door.

Duke. Well! let us forget what is paſt, and regulate our Conduct better for the future.

Dutcheſs. Endeavour to amend your's; I defy the cenſorious World to find Fault with mine.

Duke. *Thus well-bred Cuckolds in St.* James's *ſquare,*
Comply with ev'ry Caprice of the fair,
And whilſt his ſpouſe a lac'd Gallant ſuborns,
The Duke into his Pocket puts his Horns:
The Dutcheſs of her favours moſt profuſe,
Still keeps a Corner for another Uſe. (Scene ſhuts.

SCENE II.

Dutcheſs of Loveſport *at her Toilet.*

Dutcheſs. Lord! How like a hag I look. That odious Creature my husband came in quite *mal à propos*. *I* never ſee the filthy Animal, but *I* am indiſpoſed for three hours after; *I* don't know what *I* ſhall do to recover my ſpirits. Here *Betty*.

Enter Betty.

Betty. Did your Ladyſhip call.

Dutcheſs. Yes; ſend Monſieur *Friſſeron* the hair-cutter to me. *Exit.*

Enter Monſieur Friſſeron.

Monſ. Bon jour Madame, j'ai l'honneur de vous ſaluer très humblement. Voulez-vous que je vous accomode préſentement Madame.

Dutcheſs. Oui, Monſ. je puis terriblement debéer n'eſt ce pas? *Monſ.*

Monſ. Me vill accommodate your hair in two or three Moments, Madam. (*Taking his Pincers.*

Dutcheſs. You need not mind now, *I* had indiſpos'd myſelf a little.

Monſ. Me be very ſorry for it, Madam.

Dutcheſs leaning upon him. Monſieur, when the *French* Ladies have a head-ach, or any ſuch trifling Ailment, what Remedy have they generally recourſe to?

Monſ. De *French* Lady has but one Remedy for all Sort of Maladie, and dat is de Gallant.

Dutcheſs. O Lord! ſuch a Remedy is worſe than any Diſeaſe. *I* muſt lie down a Moment upon that Couch. *I* want a little Repoſe. Monſieur, read a few Pages in that *French* Romance to amuſe me.

Monſieur goes to the Bed-ſide, and reads a Page doubled down in les Egaremens du Cœur & de l'Eſprit:

—— Pendant qu'elle me parloit comme ca elle commencoit a badiner avec mes Cheveux:

(*Here the* Dutcheſs *plays with* Monſieur's *Hair.* Monſieur *continues*:

—— Etant devenu hardi parla je l'ai embraſſe pluſieurs fois & elle a pas paru effarouché.

Dutcheſs. *I* like the Lady's Character; *I* could never endure a Prude.

Monſ. aſide. Je vois bien qu'elle me veut. (*Embraces the Dutcheſs.*

Dutcheſs. Fie, fie, Monſieur, you're rude.

Monſ. *I* would not for de Varld be rude to a Lady.

Dutcheſs pulls him gently upon the Bed, and unbuttons his, &c.

Enter Lord Lawleſs.

Lord *Lawleſs.* Dear Lady *Loveſport*, this husband of your's is an excellent Fellow. We need not now give ourſelves the Trouble about procuring interviews:

Come then, my fair One, let the God of Love,
Laugh in thy Eyes, and triumph in thy Heart.
[*Going to the Couch.*

Dut. Lord! you come upon me as ſuddenly as a Huſband

Husband. These Men are all so unpolite; I shall forswear their Company at last.

Lord Law. Who have we got here in the Name of Wonder? Oh! 'tis *Frisseron*, My Barber; the impudent Dog, to pretend to rival a Nobleman!

Frisseron. Ah! Monsieur, je vous demande très-humblement Pardon.

Lord Law. D—n your Blood, you Rascal, will nothing but a Dutchess serve you. [*Kicks him out.*

Mons. Ah, mon Dieu!

Dut. Was there ever such intolerable Impertinence; you take Liberties that *I* would not bear even from a Husband.

Lord Law. Oh! Madam, you change Husbands so often, that you must be accustomed to such Accidents. *I* shall take Care to tell this Adventure wherever *I* go, and so *I* am your Ladyship's most obedient humble Servant. [*Exit.*

Dutchess alone. Well! these Men are horrid unreasonable Creatures. The Fellow has the impudence to treat me as if *I* was his Wife.

SCENE III.

Duke of Lovesport *solus.*

We Noblemen are so us'd to such Accidents, as that of Yesterday, that we can keep our Temper upon Occasions, that would put one of our Inferiors quite out of Patience. Some Blockheads, from a foolish and mistaken Notion of Honour, would expose their Lives in a Duel, had they surprized their Wives in so familiar a Posture with a young Fellow, as I did mine Yesterday. But it was always my Opinion, that such Trifles should not ruffle that philosophic Composure of Mind which is so becoming in a Person of Quality. I know how to make myself Amends for my wife's Inconstancy: I have long had a Passion for Lady *Syco-phant*; and Sir *William*, who has as just a way of thinking in these Matters, as I have myself, offers to procure me his wife for the Sum of Ten Thousand Pounds.

The Price is a little exorbitant; but as he's in Debt, I hope to bring him down to Five or Six Thouſand. However, Pleaſure cannot be too dearly bought.

Intereſt with Souls like mine, bears little away,
My Wife I give, and for another's pay.

SCENE IV.

Scene changes to Sir William Sycophant's *Houſe in* Groſvenor-Square.

Duke of Loveſport *and Sir* William *entering.*

Sir *William.* I have told your Grace already, that I am reſolved not to take leſs than Ten Thouſand Pounds; and I am ſurpriſed, that a Perſon of your Rank ſhould think much of purchaſing Pleaſure with ſo ſmall a Sum.

Duke. Sir *William*, you know by Experience that Perſons of Rank and Quality have Occaſion for their Money as well as their Inferiors. Let us try, if we can't compromiſe this Matter, The Dutcheſs of *Loveſport* is a fine woman. Now if you deal with me for Six Thouſand Pounds, you ſhall have her into the Bargain.

Sir *William.* I thank your Grace for the Offer. But, at preſent, I want Money more than any thing elſe, and am reſolved to abate nothing of my demand.

Duke. Was there ever ſo unreaſonable a Fellow. However, I muſt cloſe with him. Well! Sir *William*, you ſhall have your own Terms. Let us ſend directly for our Lawyers, and ſign the Deed.

Sir *William*, Allons dons.

SCENE V. *St.* James's *Park.*

Lord Lawleſs *and Lord* Libertine *meeting.*

Lord *Libertine.* How have you been this Age, my Lord?

Lord *Law.* My Lord, your Lordſhip's moſt obedient humble Servant.

Lord *Lib.* My Lord, I am impatient to know what Succeſs you had with the Dutcheſs.

Lord

Lord *Low*. Damn the B—t—ch to Hell and the Devil, ſhe has p—x—d me; I ſhou'd have done more prudently, had I remained true to *K—t—y F—ſh—r*.

Lord *Lib*. Ha! ha! ha! I told you how your Amour would end. In the preſent Age, the Ladies of Q—ty of *England* have ſo well copied the Manners of thoſe of *France*, that they are greater Benefactreſſes to the Surgeons than the Actreſſes and common whores.

Lord *Law*. D——n them to Hell and the Devil; they only bring Nobility into diſgrace, by copying the Manners of their Inferiors, juſt as a Parcel of low-lived wretches make the Manners of their Superiors appear ridiculous by an awkard Imitation of them. But as theſe Creatures have been lately ridicul'd upon the Stage, the only Place where the Bad may be expoſed, and the Good rewarded, in that admirable Piece, *High Life below Stairs*; it is to be hoped, this Abuſe will not long prevail among us.

You've ſeen High Life below Stairs, but to Night,
We ſhow Low Life above Stairs, rarer Sight,
Conceit makes Lacquies to our Airs pretend,
But into Lacquies Love makes Lords deſcend.
Love the deſpotic Maſter levels all,
And no Diſtinction knows of great or ſmall.

EPILOGUE intended to be ſpoken by Mr. *Garrick*.

THE World's turn'd upſide down, throughout the Nation,
No Mortal is contented with his Station;
Dull Citizens to vie with Nobles ſtrive,
Lords take the Whip in Hand and Coaches drive:
The Footman apes the Manners of his Maſter,
And N— b—y himſelf turns Poetaſter:
Such are the various Follies of the Times,
As might from M—y force ſome wretched Rh'mes.
So great the Crop of Fools in this our Age,
There cannot be a Dearth upon the Stage.
Our Author from this Source prolific gleans,
And draws from human Nature all his Scenes:
His Talents for the Drama, and his Wit,
We humbly to your Judgment do ſubmit,
Ye Sons of Senſe, ye Cities of the Pit.
If our Pretenſions on the Stage ſhould fail,
We to the Bedford Coffee-houſe appeal.

FINIS.